

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-15 IO-13

DRC-01 /108 W

----- 031838

R 061539Z SEP 73

FM AMEMBASSY OSLO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7072

INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L OSLO 3301

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT NO

SUBJECT: NORWEGIAN GOVERNMENTAL SHIFT COULD OCCUR BEFORE
OCTOBER

REF: (A) OSLO 3250 (B) OSLO 2436

BEGIN SUMMARY. IT IS THEORETICALLY POSSIBLE THAT A CHANGE
OF GOVERNMENT IN NORWAY COULD COME WITHIN THE NEXT TEN
DAYS TO TWO WEEKS. IF THE ELECTIONS PRODUCE A CLEAR
SOCIALIST MAJORITY, PRIME MINISTER KORVALD MIGHT DECIDE
THAT A MONTH'S CARETAKER STATUS IS POINTLESS; WITH HIS
EARLY RESIGNATION, THE PARLIAMENT COULD BE RECALLED TO
APPROVE A NEW LABOR GOVERNMENT. END SUMMARY

1. IF THE LABOR PARTY DOES COME TO POWER AS A RESULT OF
NORWAY'S SEPTEMBER 9-10 GENERAL ELECTIONS, IT IS CONCEIV-
ABLE THAT A NEW GOVERNMENT HEADED BY FORMER PRIME MINISTER
TRYGVE BRATTELI COULD TAKE OFFICE WELL BEFORE THE END OF
SEPTEMBER.

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2. THE CONSTITUTIONAL SITUATION IS THAT THE PRESENT STORTING

(PARLIAMENT), WHICH WAS RECESSED IN JUNE BUT NOT DISSOLVED, WILL RECONVENE ON SEPTEMBER 28 FOR FORMAL DISSOLUTION. THE NEW STORTING WHICH WILL BE ELECTED THIS WEEKEND TAKES OFFICE OCTOBER 1, BUT ACCORDING TO STORTING PRESIDNET INGVALDSEN, ON WHOM I PAID A COURTESY CALL EARLIER THIS WEEK, THE FORMAL OPENING WILL NOT BE UNTIL OCTOBER 9 OR 10. THIS DELAYED OPENING IS CUSTOMARY IN ELECTION YEARS, INGVALDSEN SAID, TO ALLOW TIME FOR NEGOTIATIONS ON A NEW GOVERNMENT.

3. IT IS NOT ESSENTIAL, HOWEVER, THAT A GOVERNMENT SHIFT BE DELAYED UNTIL OCTOBER, AND THERE IS SPECULATION THAT PRIME MINISTER KORVALD MIGHT DECIDE TO RESIGN EARLY IF THE ELECTION GIVES A CLEAR MAJORITY TO THE SOCIALISTS. KORVALD TOLD ME TWO MONTHS AGO THAT HE WOULD IN SUCH CASE RESIGN "IMMEDIATELY AFTER ELECTIONS" (REF B), BUT MORE RECENTLY HE HAS SAID PUBLICLY THAT, IN THE EVENT OF A SOCIALIST MAJORITY, HE WOULD RESIGN "AS SOON AS THE NEW STORTING CONVENES."

4. ODD HOJDAHL, VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE TRADE UNION FEDERATION AND A MINISTER IN THE LAST BRATTELI GOVERNMENT, TOLD ME TODAY THAT TOP LABOR CIRCLES ARE SPECULATING ON WHAT KORVALD MAY DO BUT THAT THEY HAVE NO FIRM INDICATION OF HIS INTENTIONS. HOJDAHL THINKS IT POSSIBLE THAT BRATTELI MIGHT HASTEN THE PROCESS ALONG BY ANNOUNCING AFTER ELECTIONS THAT HE COULD FORM A CABINET WITHIN THREE DAYS. IF KORVALD THEN DECIDED THAT HE DID NOT WISH TO RUN A BASICALLY POWERLESS CARETAKER GOVERNMENT FOR ANOTHER MONTH, THE STORTING COULD BE RECALLED ON SHORT NOTICE TO APPROVE THE NEW GOVERNMENT.

5. MEANWHILE, WE ARE STILL WAITING FOR THE VOTES TO BE COUNTED. BUCHANAN

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